



PRAY WITH US

JANUARY — APRIL 2024



NEW ZEALAND

BIBLE SOCIETY

NGĀ RINGA HĀPAI I TE PAIPERA TĀPU KI AOTEAROA

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This free Prayer Booklet is published by Bible Society New Zealand and distributed to members of our Prayer Team, so together we can pray as a means of support for Bible mission across the globe. With more than 150 Bible Societies operating in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide, there's plenty to pray for!

Some of our prayers are related to projects we are currently supporting (these projects are tagged in the booklet). Other projects reflect the broader range of the mission. Our staff pray for projects on a weekly basis. Through this booklet you can also be involved.

If you've just been given a copy of this Prayer Booklet and would like to receive this regularly, please send an email to info@biblesociety.org.nz to sign up and join our Prayer Team.

Front cover Image: A boy praying at Matjetjeni Care Point at Joyela, Swaziland. ©Francois Sieberhagen

Back cover Image: A woman praying at the Genet church in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. ©Dag Smemo

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” — 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (ESV)

Dear Prayer Partner,

As a society, we are facing many issues. But despite that, we continue to trust and pray that the Lord hears and responds to our united prayers within the current environment. Whatever the challenges ahead, prayer will remain an integral part of the life of the Fellowship.

Prayer will always be essential to our mission of helping make the Bible accessible to everyone and encouraging interaction with it. *Pray with Us* is part of a series of initiatives to support Bible mission through prayer. In this edition you will find prayer points and related Scriptures for projects that UBS supports across the world, many of which are supported by BSNZ from January to April.

Sign up from a prayer e-newsletter by emailing:
info@biblesociety.org.nz

Visit our website: www.biblesociety.org.nz/pray-with-us

Follow us on our Social Media platforms as we develop prayer content.

We also send out prayer points to both our *Bible a Month Regular Giving* donors and to our appeal donors. What's more, our team at Bible Society and Manna Christian Stores come together each week in our chapel session to pray for the projects that we are currently supporting. **Together, our prayers are working to bring the Word of God to people in many countries across the world.**

Ngā manaakitanga,

Prayer Team

Note: You may notice the acronym 'BAMRG' appearing in brackets after certain countries. It stands for *Bible a Month Regular Giving*. These countries receive financial support for Bible mission projects, funded by our *Bible a Month Regular Givers*.

Bible Society New Zealand

Bible Society was established in New Zealand in 1846 and is a member of the United Bible Societies (UBS).

We are dedicated to helping make the Bible accessible to everyone and encouraging interaction with it. We aim to serve the whole Christian community by working closely with Christian churches of all denominations. We do not receive government funding and rely on the prayers and financial support of churches and individuals like you.

We thank you for your prayerful support.

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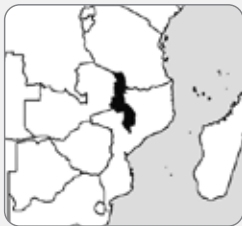
MALAWI (BAMRG)

Capital: Lilongwe

Population: 21.2 million

Languages: English, Chewa (both official).

Religions: Christianity 77%, Islam 14%, traditionalist 1%, Other/none 7%



In 1891, Nyasaland became a British protectorate. In 1964, it achieved independence. It was ruled by Dr. Hastings Banda for thirty years, a colourful but ruthless dictator. In 1994, following international pressure Malawi held its first multiparty elections. Today, Malawi is a stable but poor country in a region plagued by wars, civil strife, and violent politics.

It is densely populated and there has been little development. Seventy-two per cent of the population is living in poverty surviving through subsistence agriculture. Seventy-seven per cent identify as Christian. Through its Family Scripture Engagement project, the Bible Society of Malawi is providing impoverished rural families with Scripture packs, including a Bible, a children's Bible, and a Bible reading guide.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for Malawians who are facing many challenges including poverty, unemployment, and low levels of education.
- Pray for Scripture resources for the impoverished believers and that Bible Society's Scripture engagement project will impact many.
- Pray for the government as it addresses many areas of concern, including poor roading and infrastructure, and waterways.

Scripture:

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." John 6:35 (NIV)

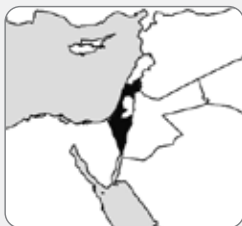
ISRAEL

Capital: Jerusalem

Population: 9 million

Languages: Hebrew, Arabic, English.

Religions: Jewish 73%, Islam 18%, Christianity 2%, Druze 2%, Other 5%



"Our staff is safe, but the situation is very tense. After yesterday when Hamas terrorists entered the Jewish towns and brutally massacred and kidnapped people, many are in a state of shock. One of our staff was called up for army duty. Some rockets fell very close to us. However, all of us are safe and thank you for your prayers," says Victor, Executive Director of the Bible Society in Israel (BSI).

During the current crisis, the BSI is actively involved in providing both humanitarian and spiritual aid, such as Scriptures and essential supplies to those who lost their loved ones and homes during the Hamas attacks. They are involved in prayer gatherings. As well, they are continuing their regular work of providing Scriptures to many different people.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for God's grace and comfort for those who are imprisoned, kidnapped, injured, and in mourning.
- Pray that God will grant leaders restraint and wisdom to seek long-term solutions that promote dignity and honour for both Palestinians and Jewish people.
- Pray that the Lord will use the BSI's projects to increase His kingdom and the body of Christ in Israel.

Scripture:

"Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to the Israel of God." Galatians 6:16 (NIV)

KYRGYZSTAN

Capital: Bishkek

Population: 6.1 million

Languages: Kyrgyz, Russian (both official), Uzbek.

Religions: Islam 90%, Christianity 7%, Other 3%



In the 7th century, Christianity reached Kyrgyzstan, a remote, mountainous country in Central Asia. But between the 8th – 12th centuries, Islam was introduced to the Kyrgyz tribes. In 1876, Kyrgyzstan became a part of the Russian Empire. Between 1917 - 1924, Kyrgyzstan enjoyed a brief period of independence before being incorporated into the U.S.S.R. Great suffering was inflicted upon the population when Joseph Stalin forced the mass relocations of people and established arbitrary borders across ethnic lines. In 1991, Kyrgyzstan declared its independence.

The Bible Society of Kyrgyzstan is helping young Christians up to 14 years old to connect with the Bible. It is distributing Bible storybooks, and a 'make your own children's Bible' colouring-in book through churches and Sunday schools.

Prayer Points:

- Give thanks that Kyrgyzstan has more religious freedom than its neighbours enabling it to develop Scripture resources and to undertake Bible translation.
- Pray for the economy as high unemployment and widespread poverty is forcing hundreds of thousands of people to seek work in Russia and Kazakhstan every year.
- Pray for the distribution process so that more and more children can have access to the Word of God.

Scripture:

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:14 (NIV)

CHAD

Capital: N'Djamena

Population: 18.5 million

Languages: French, Arabic (both official), Sara, more than 120 indigenous languages.

Religions: Islam 52%, Christianity 44%, animist 0.3%, Other/none 3.7%



Chad is a landlocked country at the crossroads of Central and North Africa. It has more than 200 ethnic groups and 120 languages. In 1960, it achieved independence from France, but this was followed by three decades of civil war. The country has an agricultural economy where 80 per cent of the population engages in subsistence farming, but this is hindered by a lack of rainfall and severe droughts.

The Saghawa, a Muslim minority group, control much of the government, trade, and the armed forces, but they do allow religious freedom. Partnering with churches, the Bible Society of Chad is distributing Bibles for women in urban and rural areas to replace old worn-out Bibles or to provide Bibles for the first time.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for pioneer missionaries to persevere in difficult places to reach the unreached in Chad.
- Pray for integrity and honesty to rule the nation and to replace government corruption.
- Give thanks for Christian resources such as Bible storytelling and the Chadian Arabic Christian radio stations.

Scripture:

"I spread out my hands to you; I thirst for you like a parched land." Psalm 143:6 (NIV)

EGYPT (BAMRG)

Capital: Cairo

Population: 109.5 million

Languages: Arabic, English, French.

Religions: Islam 90%, Christianity 10%



Christianity was first brought to Egypt by Saint Mark in the mid-first century AD. Since then, Egyptian Christianity has given much to the world, including great theologians, such as Origen, the "Father of Theology," and the monastic movement which began in the deserts of Egypt and spread to other countries.

For 1,000 years, Egypt was a Christian-majority country. Today, Coptic Christians make up 10 per cent of the population. Through its network of nineteen Bible shops, the Bible Society of Egypt is serving the Church and communities by providing Scriptures. Currently, Egypt is building a new administrative capital city in the desert east of Cairo. The Bible Society of Egypt is seeking to establish a new ministry centre there consisting of a bookshop and office space to serve the local Church and future generations.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for the Coptic Church which is the largest body of Christians in the Middle East and a strategic key for evangelisation of the region.
- Pray for Bible Society's mission, for its large scale Bible distribution and the creative ways that it maintains a public presence.
- Pray for the thirty per cent of the population that is living in poverty, which is exacerbated by a water crisis with farmers facing imprisonment for breaking water regulations.

Scripture:

"Egypt rises like the Nile, like rivers of surging waters."
Jeremiah 46:8 (NIV)

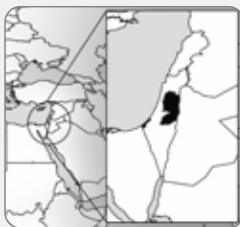
THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

Capital: Jerusalem, Ramallah

Population: 5.2 million

Languages: Arabic, Hebrew, English.

Religions: Islam 83%, Jewish 14%, Christianity 2.5%, Other 0.5%



The Palestinian Bible Society is based in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip where around 5.2 million people live, 2.5 million of whom are under the age of eighteen. Bible Society is reaching out to children and youth through its Child of Bethlehem project. It aims to show children the love of Jesus Christ through Bible events and camps, biblical trips, puppet shows, Bible quizzes and school programmes.

During the war, which is taking place in the Gaza Strip, it is providing essential supplies to people in need, as requested by key church leaders. It has also launched a social media campaign to offer spiritual and emotional support to the affected population in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Prayer Points:

- Pray that children and youth will be uplifted by the Child of Bethlehem project and pray for coordinators to lead the programme.
- Pray for the work of the Palestinian Bible Society as it reaches out to people with the Gospel message, which is needed now more than ever.
- Pray for the protection of the staff of the Palestinian Bible Society, whose offices in the Gaza Strip have been destroyed in the bombings.

Scripture:

He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field." Luke 10:2 (NIV)

ANGOLA

Capital: Luanda

Population: 35.9 million

Languages: Portuguese (official), Umbundu, Kikongo, Kimbundu, other indigenous languages.

Religions: Christianity 79%, Other/none 21%



Angola is a large, coastal country in Southern Africa. It was a Portuguese colony for 450 years during which time the Portuguese profited greatly from the slave trade, sending five–six million Angolans to the New World as slaves. Today, the impact of this is still being felt with 40 per cent living in poverty.

In 1975, the Carnation Revolution, which was a coup led by the Marxist-oriented Movement for Liberation of Angola (MPLA) ended colonial rule. Afterwards civil war broke out which saw millions internally displaced and 900,000 die. In 1990, a peace deal was negotiated under the UN, but it was followed by more fighting and further deaths. The Bible Society of Angola is providing solar-powered audio Bibles called Proclaimers to visually disabled people in Luanda.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for the safe removal of millions of landmines which are still killing and maiming many, especially children.
- Pray that visually impaired people will find comfort in reading the Scriptures.
- Give thanks that Angola has seen extraordinary growth in Christianity, with the number of evangelicals quadrupling to over four million today.

Scripture:

"Better the poor whose walk is blameless than a fool whose lips are perverse." Proverbs 19:1 (NIV)

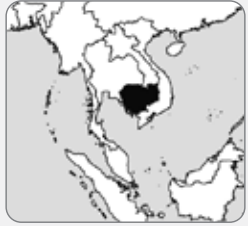
CAMBODIA

Capital: Phnom Penh

Population: 16.9 million

Languages: Khmer, Chinese, Vietnamese, indigenous languages.

Religions: Buddhism 97%, Islam 2%, Christianity 0.3%, Other 0.7%



Powerful kingdoms such as the Khmer Empire ruled Cambodia from the 1st to the 14th centuries. Then, for five hundred years Cambodia was a pawn in regional and global conflicts enduring invasion, occupation, or aggression. It was a victim of the Vietnam War (1970 – 1975). In 1975, the Marxist Khmer Rouge came into power, inflicting a savage genocide upon the population. In 1979, the Vietnamese army ousted the Khmer Rouge, but civil war raged until 1991.

Today, seventeen per cent of Cambodians are living below the poverty line, and, because the Khmer Rouge destroyed most of the education system, many people are illiterate. The Bible Society of Cambodia is providing 500 literacy classes per year to Cambodians, both Christian and non-Christian, who have never learned to read and write.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for justice and healing from the genocide that the Khmer Rouge inflicted upon the population in the mid-to-late 1970s.
- Give thanks that despite past governmental attempts to eliminate all religions, Christianity has survived.
- Pray for mature Christian leadership to mobilise the churches to meet the needs of Cambodian Christians today.

Scripture:

"Look on my suffering and deliver me, for I have not forgotten your law." Psalm 119:153 (NIV)

BANGLADESH (BAMRG)

Capital: Dhaka

Population: 167.1 million

Languages: Bangla
(or Bengali.)

Religions: Islam 89%,
Hinduism 9%, Buddhism 1%, Christianity 1%



In the 16th century, Portuguese traders first brought Christianity to what is now modern-day Bangladesh. In 1793, William Carey, known as the “father of modern missions”, arrived in West Bengal, which borders Bangladesh. He translated the Bible into Bengali and developed a schooling system. Other missionary societies followed. But today Christianity remains a minority religion, with most Christians living in poor, rural areas.

In 1953, the East Pakistan Bible Society was established. In 1971, Bangladesh achieved independence from East Pakistan. Today, the Bangladesh Bible Society is translating children’s Scripture materials into Santali, a language spoken by the Santal people, an ethnic group which numbers around 130,000 in Bangladesh. This will enable 24,000 beneficiaries to benefit from having access to the Bible.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for Christians who experience persecution, but give thanks for the work of churches which demonstrate the love of Christ through relief work.
- Pray for the economy as millions of people are living in poverty working in either agriculture or textiles.
- Pray for spiritual growth among children and youth who receive the Santali Scripture materials.

Scripture:

“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.”
Proverbs 22:6 (NIV)

LEBANON

Capital: Beirut

Population: 5.3 million

Languages: Arabic (official), French, English, Armenian.

Religions: Islam 54%, Christianity 40%, Druze 5%, Other 1%



Once home to the Phoenician city-states, the modern state of Lebanon was created in 1920 when it came into existence as a French-mandated territory. In 1943, Lebanon achieved independence. Between 1975 – 1990, it experienced civil war.

Today, Lebanon is a country that is struggling under many issues, including an economic crisis, being host to the highest number of refugees per capita in the world, and the port explosion of 2020. The Bible Society of Lebanon is endeavouring to bring the love of Jesus Christ into people's lives through Bible engagement projects, Bible-based trauma healing projects, and Bible and relief distribution. These are aimed at restoring hope and encouraging people to remain in Lebanon and rebuild their lives.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for Christians to commit to living in Lebanon to spread the gospel to their neighbours.
- Pray for healing and forgiveness for those deeply wounded by the tragedy of war.
- Give thanks that there is freedom of religion in Lebanon and that people are legally allowed to change their religion.

Scripture:

"Let me go over and see the good land beyond the Jordan—that fine hill country and Lebanon."
Deuteronomy 3:25 (NIV)

COSTA RICA

Capital: San Jose

Population: 5.2 million

Languages: Spanish (official), English.

Religions: Christianity 68%, Other/none 32%



In 1502, Christopher Columbus discovered what is now Costa Rica. He gave the country its name which means Rich Coast in Spanish. For three hundred years, Costa Rica was a Spanish colony. In 1821, it became part of the Mexican Empire. In 1838, it became independent from the United Provinces of Central America.

Unlike its neighbouring countries, Costa Rica has a long history of a stable, multiparty democratic government. Traditionally dependent on agriculture, particularly coffee and bananas, it has recently expanded its economy to include technology and eco-tourism. The Bible Society of Costa Rica is translating the Bible into the indigenous language of Ngäbe and providing Scripture portions in Braille.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for church ministries aimed at reaching youth, who comprise two-thirds of the nation's population.
- Pray for churches as they minister to the many Nicaraguan refugees who have fled the instability in their own country.
- Pray for indigenous churches to be planted and give thanks for those groups that have Scripture, including the Bribri and the Cabecar.

Scripture:

"I will grant peace in the land, and you will lie down, and no one will make you afraid. I will remove wild beasts from the land, and the sword will not pass through your country." Leviticus 26:6 (NIV)

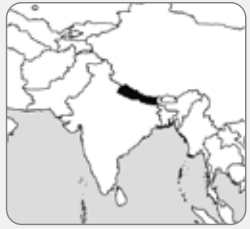
NEPAL

Capital: Kathmandu

Population: 30.9 million

Languages: Nepali (official), Maithali, Bhojपुरi, Tharu, 123 languages spoken.

Religions: Hindu 81%, Buddhism 8%, Islam 5%, Kiratism 3%, Christianity 2%, Other 1%



In the 18th century, the Shah dynasty unified principalities and states to create the Kingdom of Nepal. In 1814–16, it fought the Anglo-Nepalese war, which led to a peace treaty being signed between Britain and Nepal. Nepal has never been ruled by a colonial power. In 2008, it witnessed sweeping political changes, which had begun in the 1950s, with the Hindu monarchy yielding to pro-democracy protests.

Today, Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world with 90 per cent of the population surviving on subsistence agriculture. Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic and earthquakes have also taken their toll. The Nepalese Bible Society is working to provide its Deaf community with Bible stories in Nepalese sign language.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for young people who make up two-thirds of Nepal's population, who mainly live in the rural areas and receive little education.
- Give thanks that each of Nepal's 75 districts has a church plant and believers can be found in almost every people group.
- Pray for Christians who despite religious freedom are still at risk of fines and imprisonment for proselytising.

Scripture:

"Look, there on the mountains, the feet of one who brings good news, who proclaims peace!" Nahum 1:15 (NIV)

ARGENTINA

Capital: Buenos Aires

Population: 46.6 million

Languages: Spanish (official), Italian, English, German, French, Quechua, Guarani, Mapudungun.

Religions: Christianity 94%, Jewish 2%, Other 4%



In 1480, the Inca Empire invaded the area which is now known as Argentina. In 1516, the Spanish explorer Juan Díaz de Solís arrived, but he was killed by the indigenous people. In 1533, Spain conquered the Inca Empire. Unfortunately, European diseases wiped out most of the indigenous population. Today, 97 per cent of the population is of European, mostly Spanish and Italian descent.

In 1816, the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata, which included Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina, declared their independence from Spain. Following WWII, President Peron introduced an era of populism. In 1976, a military junta took power. In 1983, democracy was restored. The Argentine Bible Society is translating the Bible into indigenous languages, and it is distributing children's Scriptures.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for the local church to reach out spiritually and economically to the 500,000 people living in slums.
- Pray for Argentina's indigenous people many of whom live in poverty and have the least access to education.
- Give thanks that social, economic, and political difficulties have created a spiritual hunger in Argentinians that has drawn many to Christ.

Scripture:

"Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." Proverbs 31:9 (NIV)

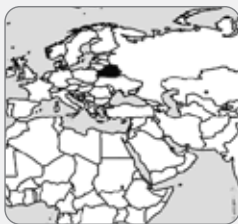
BELARUS (BAMRG)

Capital: Minsk

Population: 9.3 million

Languages: Russian (official), Belarusian, Polish, Ukrainian.

Religions: Christianity 55%, Other/none 45%



Between the 9th - 13th centuries, Belarus was a part of Kievan Rus, a group of principalities in Eastern and Northern Europe. In the 13th century, it became part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In the 16th century it came under the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

In the 18th century, following the partitions of Poland's Belarusian territories it became part of the Russian Empire. In 1922, it joined the U.S.S.R. During WWII, it came under Nazi occupation. In 1991, it achieved independence from the Soviet Union. However, it has retained closer ties with Russia than any of the other former Soviet republics. The Bible Society of Belarus is translating the Bible into Belarusian, and it is providing children's Scriptures for children in difficult life situations.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for a truly indigenous expression of Belarusian Christianity to develop and spread through church services, theological education, literature, and broadcasting.
- Pray for all those affected by the ongoing consequences of the 1986 Chernobyl catastrophe, including children who are born with health issues.
- Give thanks that despite persecution and limitations on religious freedoms, the church is still growing.

Scripture:

"That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." 2 Corinthians 12:10 (NIV)

URUGUAY

Capital: Montevideo
Population: 3.4 million
Languages: Spanish (official)
Religions: Christianity 57%,
 Other/none 43%



Christianity was brought to Uruguay by the Franciscans who sought to convert the indigenous population. In 1830, Uruguay's constitution established Catholicism as the state religion. However, in 1917 a new constitution separated church and state.

Today, Uruguay is the most secular country in South America with high rates of depression, suicide, abortion, and divorce. Twenty-seven per cent of the population is living below the poverty line. During the COVID-19 pandemic, state assistance such as meals in schools for children ceased. Therefore, families began turning to community soup kitchens and churches for food. Through its 'Breakfast with Jesus' project, the Bible Society of Uruguay is distributing Scriptures and fortified chocolate milk powder to churches, so they can provide morning tea activities for impoverished children.

Prayer Points:

- With high rates of suicide, depression, abortion, and divorce, pray that Uruguayans will abandon New Age thinking and discover Christ.
- Pray that through the 'Breakfast with Jesus' project, 10,000 children will come to know Jesus Christ as their Saviour over the next five years.
- Pray that many agnostics, atheists, and nominal Christians will personally encounter Jesus Christ.

Scripture:

"Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning."
 Joel 2:12 (NIV)

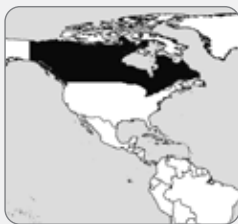
CANADA

Capital: Ottawa

Population: 38.5 million

Languages: English, French (both official), Chinese, many indigenous and immigrant languages.

Religions: Christianity 53%, Islam 5%, Hinduism 2%, Sikhism 2%, Buddhism 1%, Jewish 0.9%, Traditional 0.2%, Other/none 35.9%



The first people to reach Canada crossed the Bering Straits from Asia. In the 17th century, the French founded Quebec and Montreal. During the Seven Years War (1756-1763) Britain and France fought for control of Canada. In 1763, the French signed the Treaty of Paris surrendering its Canadian territories to Britain. In 1867, it became the Dominion of Canada. In 1982, it gained full constitutional independence under the Canada Act.

In the 20th century, there has been an exodus of people from the rural areas to the cities. Canada also accepts more immigrants every year than any other G20 country and many of its cities now have large immigrant populations. The Canadian Bible is working to translate the Bible into four indigenous languages.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for Christian missionary vision to bring the Gospel to the many living in large immigrant communities that are largely unevangelised.
- Pray for healing for Canada's First Nation's people, 47 per cent of whom identify as Christian, from centuries of abuse, and the loss of land, languages, and culture.
- Pray that the Church will remain relevant, moral, and dynamic in Canadian society, which has experienced a considerable drop in the influence of the Gospel.

Scripture:

The mountains quake before Him and the hills melt away. The earth trembles at His presence, the world and all who live in it. Nahum 1:5 (NIV)

MONGOLIA

Capital: Ulaanbaatar

Population: 3.2 million

Languages: Mongolian (official), Russian, English, German, Kazakh.

Religions: Buddhism 52%, Islam 3%, Shamanism 2.5%, Christian 1%, Other/none 41.5%



In the 12th century, Genghis Khan emerged as the ruler of the Mongols, who had a long history of nomadic empires dating back to the 4th century. His empire extended across much of Eurasia. Under Kublai Khan, his grandson, the empire extended as far as China. In the 17th century, Mongolia fell under the rule of the Manchus of the Chinese Qing Dynasty.

In 1911, following the collapse of the Manchus, Mongolia declared its independence. In 1924, it joined the U.S.S.R. In 1990, Mongolia transitioned to a democracy. Today, Mongolia maintains close ties with Russia while China is its largest economic partner. The Mongolian Union Bible Society is working to revise the Mongolian Standard Version Bible, and to provide Scripture in Mongolian Sign language.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for the Mongolian Church, which is only a generation old, and for training for church leaders.
- Give thanks that the number of Mongolian Christians have grown from four in 1989 to around 40,000 believers today.
- Give thanks that there are now 200 churches in the capital as well as believers, if only in tiny groups, in all the provincial centres.

Scripture:

"We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing."
1 Corinthians 2:6 (NIV)

SOUTH AFRICA

Capital: Pretoria (administrative), Cape Town (legislative), Bloemfontein (judicial).

Population: 58 million

Languages: Eleven official languages, including English, Afrikaans and nine ethnic languages of which isiZulu and isiXhosa are the most widely spoken.

Religions: Christianity 85%, Traditional 8%, Islam 2%, Hindu 1%, Other/none 4%



Originally inhabited by Bantu-speaking tribes, the Dutch established Cape Town as a stopover point on the spice route to the Far East in 1652. In 1806, the British arrived. In 1879, the Anglo-Zulu War saw the British seize the Zulu kingdom's territory. In 1899 – 1902, the British and the Boers fought the Second South African War. In 1948, the National Party instituted a policy of apartheid. Many African National Congress (ANC) leaders spent decades in prison.

In 1994, the first multi-racial elections took place which ushered in majority rule under an ANC-led government. Since then, South Africa has struggled to address apartheid-era imbalances in wealth, housing, education, and health care. The Bible Society of South Africa is providing Bibles for Grade 7 learners and prisoners.

Prayer Points:

- Pray for deep-seated change that will see poverty, high unemployment and high crime rates all come down.
- Pray for healing and unity among the many ethnicities that make up this “rainbow nation.”
- Give thanks for churches which are on the frontline of confronting the nation’s challenges, including the HIV/AIDS epidemic, ministries to the poor, and working on racial reconciliation.

Scripture:

And He said to the human race, “The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.” Job 28:28 (NIV)



A man praying in the Catholic cathedral in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. ©Francois Sieberhagen



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